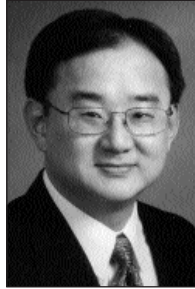


Spring 2005



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

In looking ahead to 2005, the Board discussed and is currently planning a series of events that we believe will be of interest to the membership as well as bring positive attention to our organization. In addition to the annual family picnic in summer and the Scholarship Gala in December, we are working with OCA-Nova on a Career and Economic Development Symposium scheduled for late Spring, a Classic Chinese Movie and Dinner for early Fall, and a number of community service events that we as a group can participate in our area. As we have more information for these events, we will send you more information about participation.

During the first OCA National Board meeting in January, our own Ginny Gong and Sharon Wong assumed their respective positions as newly elected National President and Vice President for Education on the Executive Council. Ginny laid out her vision for OCA for the next two years that includes a major effort for the OCA building fund drive.

In February, to celebrate the Lunar New Year, as well as Ginny's installation as our National President, we hosted a dinner at which we invited local elected officials, many APA community leaders, and all our

chapter's past presidents to highlight OCA-DC's and OCA National's roles and achievements in our community.

During February, our chapter also co-sponsored an essay contest organized by the Chinese Culture and Community Service Center (CCACC) and the Zheng He's Voyages Celebration Council to celebrate the 600th anniversary of the Ming Dynasty Chinese Admiral Zheng He and his expeditions. The contest was categorized as adult and high school, and essays written in English and Chinese. OCA-DC provided prizes in the English adult and high school subcategories. A number of the essays were very impressive with the amount of research done, and the prizes were given out during the CCACC's Lunar New Year Festival closing ceremony at the Lakeforest Mall.

In March, the chapter participated in the annual Greater DC area High School Science Fair. As usual, there were many projects and OCA-DC was delighted to be able to select several outstanding Asian American students as our winners.

There were several proposed Maryland House Bills that were anti-immigrant in nature up for hearing and vote in Annapolis in early March, and OCA-DC was part of a group that went to Annapolis to testify successfully against the passage of these bills. On the Federal level, the Administration is beginning to lobby Congress for the reauthorization of the Patriot Act in its entirety. However, since last year OCA-DC has been working with the Maryland Bill of Rights Coalition to lobby the Maryland Congressional delegates to help "sunset" a number of provisions in the Patriot Act that the authorities can easily use to violate the civil rights of US citizens, and it is our goal to have Congress pass the more reasonable Safe Act instead.

Other events that we sponsored included the 7th Annual Cherry Blossom Freedom Walk and the 1st Annual Asian American Students Union Softball Tournament both held in early April. At the Freedom Walk, attorney and community activist Bruce Yamashita was the keynote speaker. Mr. Yamashita was systematically discriminated by the US Marine Corps when he signed up with the Officer Candidate School program, where he was forced to resign his candidacy days before his graduation. Instead of leaving the program quietly, he sued the Marine Corps,

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THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR ASIAN
PACIFIC AMERICAN COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT (NCAPACD) ANTI -
PREDATORY LENDING AND FAIR HOUSING
DISCRIMINATION MEDIA CAMPAIGN
by Francis Ng

Housing discrimination is illegal

Housing discrimination persists nationwide and is severely underreported among communities in America. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that more than two million instances of housing discrimination occur annually, but in the year 2001, fewer than 24,000 complaints (1%) were filed. While studies conducted in California and Texas reveal that such discrimination is least reported among Asians, Hispanics and women who are sexually harassed in housing. Housing discrimination affects people of all races, ethnicities, national origins and religions. Women, people with disabilities, and families with children may also face barriers to their fair housing rights. These stories portray the human faces of housing discrimination – a diverse group of people who confronted discrimination and fought back against it by sharing their stories and filing complaints to end illegal practices. For example, (i) in Maryland, three African men were evicted when their landlord terminated the leases of black tenants and replaced them with white tenants; (ii) in Ohio, a Hispanic woman was denied housing because of an unlawful “no kids” policy; (iii) in California, a disabled white woman who uses a guide animal was refused a rental unit in an apartment with a “no-pets” policy; (iv) in addition, cases of linguistic profiling and interracial discrimination were also reported in some areas etc. Housing discrimination doesn’t always mean having a door slammed in your face or a bigoted remark directed your way. Unsuspecting renters or home buyers may be politely turned away from the housing of their choice, even though there are qualified. Housing discrimination is not only unfair, it is illegal.

Fair housing laws

There are many laws that provide relief for victims of housing discrimination. Rights and remedies can be found in federal laws, as well as laws in the state where you live. Title VIII of the Civil Rights Act of 1968 (Fair Housing Act), as amended, prohibits discrimination in the sale, rental, and financing of dwellings, and in other housing-related transactions, based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, and

familial status, including children under the age of 18 living with parents of legal custodians, pregnant women, and people securing custody of children under the age of 18. See more on the Fair Housing Act on the web at http://www.fairhousinglaw.org/fair_housing_laws/federal_laws.html. In 2003, President Bush signed a proclamation commemorating the 35th Anniversary of the Fair Housing Act, a strong commitment to ensuring fair housing in HUD’s many housing and community development programs. In fact, fair housing laws provide a critical way to deter and counteract housing discrimination in order to strengthen housing opportunities for families. The Fair Housing Act covers most housing in the sale and rental, as well as mortgage lending. Under the laws, no one may take any of the following actions based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, or disability:

- Refuse to rent or sell housing, or to make a mortgage loan
- Refuse to negotiate for housing or to provide information on mortgage loans
- Make housing or loan application unavailable
- Deny a dwelling or anyone access to or membership in a housing facility or service
- Impose different terms or conditions for sale or rental of a dwelling or making a loan
- Provide different housing service or facilities
- Falsely deny that housing is available for inspection, sale, or rental, or refuse to purchase a loan
- Make a profit by providing false property appraisals or by persuading owners to sell or rent.

The Fair Housing Campaign

The Fair Housing National Multimedia Campaign is designed to increase public awareness of the Fair Housing Act and its protections, encourage the reporting of fair housing discrimination to the appropriate agencies, and provide information and resources to help communities and institutions support individuals and families who exercise their fair housing rights. This award-winning campaign aims to increase recognition and reporting of housing discrimination by making all Americans aware of its widespread but subtle forms. It will be seen around the United States on television, the internet, in newspapers and magazines, and heard on the radio. With the joint efforts and coordination of the NCAPACD and HUD, OCA has recently joined together with the National Fair Housing Alliance (NFHA), Leadership Conference on Civil Rights Education Fund (LCCREF), and the Ad Council in promoting the fair housing campaign in Asian & Pacific communities. We had recorded and

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OCA-DC LUNAR NEW YEAR PARTY

by Charlet Wang

To celebrate the Year of the Rooster, OCA-DC hosted a dinner on February 10th and invited many of the local APA community leaders, as well as elected officials to attend. The dinner also served to thank the chapter's Past Presidents and Past National Presidents for their continued service to our community, and also to introduce Ginny Gong as our organization's newly installed National President, and Sharon Wong as the Executive Council's new Vice President for Education.

The dinner took place at the Meiwah Restaurant in Chevy Chase, Maryland. A private dining area was walled off from the main area and decorated with the Chinese signature red: red lanterns, red rose-candles floating in glass vases as center pieces, and red envelopes on top of white plates. Chinese chic was in the air and this elegant décor was designed and installed by Lisa Lee and her fellow Board members: Lily Qi, Francis Ng, Gerald Lo, Jenny Lin, and Charlet Wang. High School student volunteers Tracy Li and David Lin also helped by checking in the 80 invited guests.

Chapter President David Yao welcomed all the guests with some humorous remarks and set the tone for a nice informal and relaxing evening. Montgomery County Executive Douglas Duncan gave a short congratulatory speech for Ginny and presented her with a bouquet of roses. County Council President Tom Perez also congratulated OCA for our organization's work. Several of the guests were recognized including OCA's Founder Kung-Lee Wang. Prince Georges County Executive Bob Johnson was represented by OCA-DC Board Member Beth Wong.

After the delicious dinner, OCA-DC unveiled the US Post Office's Lunar New Year stamp featuring the entire set of Lunar New Year stamps from the past 12 year cycle. OCA was instrumental in urging the Post Office to produce the stamp series some 15 years ago. OCA-DC Executive Vice President Lisa Lee then introduced two local talented young cellists, Tim Wang and



Montgomery County Executive Doug Duncan and County Council President Tom Perez help Ginny Gong, Lisa Lee, David Yao and Lily Qi unveil the Lunar New Year Stamp.

Jeffery Chu, performed a Beethoven duet.

In her keynote address, Ginny Gong spoke of her background and her personal reasons for being involved in OCA. Ginny gave a very impressive speech and carried herself with grace and dignity. 2005 has marked her 20th year with OCA and her commitment was apparent. The evening ended when David Yao invited all APA community leaders and community groups to open dialogues with each other so we as a community can better understand each other and speak



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made featured ads on radio PSAs in four Asian languages, including Cantonese, Hmong, Korean and Vietnamese. These Radio PSAs will be broadcasted through nationwide Asian communities' local channels and a CD campaign material is available for advocacy or interested groups upon request at the NCAPACD. For more information, please contact Ms. Lisa Hasegawa at 202-223-2442 or lisa@nationalcapacd.org.

Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity – What you should do

Fair housing is not an option, it's the law. Choosing where you want to live is your right. Having a

landlord or lender not choose you based on your race, color, national origin, religion, sex, disability, or familial status is against the law. If you don't report discrimination, it can't be stopped. If you or anyone you know has been discriminated, or perhaps if you have been trying to buy or rent a home or apartment and you believe your rights have been violated, please call 1-800-669-9777 (translators are available) or visit the websites at <http://www.fairhousinglaw.org> or <http://www.hud.gov/offices/fheo/>. Equal Housing Opportunity is your choice, it will protect you and your family. ☺

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and after five years of litigation, the Marine Corps admitted to systematic discrimination of minority candidates, and Mr. Yamashita duly received his commission. Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta



Ribbon cutting at the Cherry Blossom Freedom Walk with Keynote Speaker Bruce Yamashita, Special Guest Hon. Norman Mineta, and Japanese Ambassador Kato.

attended the Freedom Walk as a special guest and was also a speaker. As a matter of interest, the image for the poster, t-shirt, and program brochure of the Cherry Blossom Festival this year was designed by Joan Lok, a Chinese American artist who lives in the Columbia area.

The Asian American Students Union at the University of Maryland organized a softball tournament where different Asian student groups formed teams. The tournament was originally to be held outdoors, but the fields were very wet due to heavy downpours



David Yao and Lisa Lee giving trophy to the winner Chinese American Students (CAS) team at the end of the 1st Annual AASU Softball Tournament.

during the previous day, and the event was moved indoors. However, all participants played just as hard and with great enthusiasm. The tournament was well organized, and OCA-DC looks forward to working more closely with these college students in the future.

We are also looking into supporting a new Hepatitis B Initiative in the Greater DC area. Hepatitis B is a silent disease that hits the Asian American community hard. The virus resides in the individual's liver and can cause liver cancer. Compared to the Caucasian population in the US, ethnic Chinese have a six times higher risk of developing liver cancer, ethnic Koreans have an eight times higher risk, and ethnic Vietnamese have a thirteen times higher! Of all the cases of liver cancer detected each year, fifty percent of the sufferers are ethnic Asians. As the Greater Washington DC area has a very high concentration of Asian Americans, we



OCA-DC team that attended the Montgomery County Science Fair as Special Judges in March. (l to r) Gerald, Jenny Lin, Charlet Wang, Lily Qi, Bill and Carol Lau.

believe we should be part of this awareness campaign to help educate our community about testing and prevention.

Even though the APA community has been celebrating May as the APA Heritage Month since 1992, many outside of our community do not know of this fact. OCA-DC is working with the Washington Post to put out a special multi-page insert to highlight the APA community in the Greater Washington area. We are coordinating with a number of other APA groups to make this special insert an informative publication about our community. ☺

MY FIRST NATIONAL BOARD MEETING

by Gerald Lo

Even though I have been serving on the OCA-DC Board for a year, for one reason or another, I have not been able to attend an OCA National Board Meeting until recently. The first of the four National Board Meetings of 2005 was held in the Key Bridge Marriott, Rosslyn, VA, over the last week-end of January 2005, and that happened to be my very first National Board Meeting. Since it was a National Board Meeting, there were attendees from all over the country.

The day started early on a Saturday morning when we arrived at the hotel a little before 7:30 am. As a first time attendee, I was a little nervous that I did not know too many people there. I barely had time to introduce myself to a few people around me and took a continental breakfast with me back to my seat before the meeting was called to order. I was rather relieved a few minutes later when our new National President Ginny Gong gave all the first time attendees a chance to introduce ourselves to all the meeting participants during a "warm up exercise". That broke the ice for me and suddenly, I felt quite at home in a most welcoming and friendly environment. Later on, I had opportunities to "network" with other chapter representatives from

all across the country during the rest of the day.

Ever since I joined the OCA-DC Board, I knew that our local chapter was part of a much larger organization - OCA National. The OCA National Meetings really reinforce the unique concept and reality that while OCA has a local presence everywhere through its many local chapters, it has also a national reach and impact through its National Office and the National Board. Thanks to the foresight of the founding fathers of OCA, this organizational set up with OCA National as an umbrella national organization for the local chapters really worked very well. These days, with the synergism, the "networking", and the communication channels developed at these National Meetings, local issues can be brought to the national level (and vice versa) literally with the click of a mouse. Numerous examples of that happening were in fact cited during the meeting. The local chapters were encouraged to get in touch with the National Office on any important issues and the National Office will in turn "broadcast" important information relevant to the chapters.

I finished the day feeling that I have benefited a lot from the experience of attending my first National Meeting and wondered why I did not attend a National Meeting earlier. Well, as they say, better late than never. O@

OCA - DC MEMBER PRESENTED KEYNOTE SPEECH AT OCA - SEATTLE ANNUAL CONVENTION .

by Cindy Lau

What an honor it is to have one of our own members be the keynote speaker at the 10th Anniversary Celebration of OCA-Seattle. Dr. William KM Lau was selected by the OCA-Seattle executive board to speak on the 10th Anniversary Celebration and Golden Circle Awards of the OCA-Greater Seattle Chapter, January 29, 2005. The convention was attended by over 400 members and guests. Dr. Lau 's speech is on "Beyond technical competence: from science to science management". In his speech he touched on a number of relevant issues around the world pertaining to the APA community, as well as telling his personal stories about the obstacles he has encountered during his career at NASA.

Dr. Lau received his PhD in Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Washington, Seattle. He joined



Longtime OCA-DC member Bill Lau (3rd from right) was the Keynote Speaker at the OCA-Seattle annual dinner in January. With him was Carol Lau (2nd from right). Also present was Immediate Past OCA National President Rayond Wong and OCA-Seattle Chapter President Meiling Woo.

NASA in 1981. He is currently the Director of the Laboratory for Atmospheres and is the only APA on the senior management staff at the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center. O@

PROTECT YOURSELF AND THE HEALTH OF YOUR FAMILY — GET VACCINATED FOR HEPATITIS B

by Leslie Hsu, Founder, The Hepatitis B Initiative

My parents came to the United States to pursue their graduate studies. Sacrificing everything, they worked very hard to achieve their American dream and provide their children with everything they never had. They were especially protective of my brother, who nearly died due to birth complications. The near-death experience of my brother brought the family very close. Each summer, we traveled to national parks to appreciate nature. My parents thought America was truly a land of opportunity, since they brought us to almost all the national parks in the United States and Canada.

One day without warning, my brother experienced severe abdominal pain. He was eighteen and I was a freshman in college. We were told he had liver cancer and that both he and my mother had hepatitis B. A year later after chemotherapy treatments and a liver transplant, he died of a brain hemorrhage. A month after his death, my mother was diagnosed with liver cancer. Although we fought her cancer with alternative therapies, we lost her the following year. I was a junior in college.

Learning that their deaths could have been easily prevented by the knowledge that Asians are at high risk for hepatitis B and that there is a safe and effective vaccine, I channeled my grief towards raising awareness about hepatitis B by empowering communities to take action in raising awareness about hepatitis B, developing culturally responsive campaigns, and providing access to free screenings and vaccinations. In 1997, I founded The Hepatitis B Initiative (www.hepbinitiative.org) in the Boston area and in 2002, my husband, Thomas and I expanded the program to the DC metro area.

Why should you be concerned?

Liver cancer rates are 6 times higher in Chinese Americans than white Americans. Currently in the United States there are 1.25 million people with chronic hepatitis B infection. Each year, 5000 of the 1.25 million die from liver failure. Fifty percent of the 1.25 million with chronic hepatitis B infection and fifty percent of the 5,000 that die from liver failure are Asian American and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), even though only 4.5% of the U.S. population is AAPI. Virginia and Maryland are two of twelve states that have been identified as highest at risk. These disparities are unnecessary, especially when we have an effective vaccine.

What is Hepatitis B?

Hepatitis B is a serious disease caused by a virus that attacks your liver. Your liver helps you digest the food you eat and helps your body get rid of poisons. The virus can cause lifelong infection, cirrhosis of the liver, liver cancer, liver failure, and death. It is passed by contact with blood or other body fluids of someone who has the virus. This means that mothers who are infected with hepatitis B can transmit the virus to their children. Some of the symptoms of hepatitis B are yellow eyes or skin, loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, fever, stomach or joint pain, feeling extremely tired, and brown urine. The scariest thing (which is what happened in my family) is that you could have hepatitis B and not know it, because sometimes there are no symptoms.

What can you do?

The Hepatitis B Initiative (HBI) is launching a Chinese campaign this year. If you have health insurance, we recommend that you get screened (ask your doctor for a HbsAg and HbsAb blood test, since they are not included in routine checkups) to find out if you have hepatitis B. If your blood test reveals that you have never been exposed to hepatitis B, then get vaccinated to protect yourself from hepatitis B! There are three shots that are given over a period of six months. If you are diagnosed as being chronically infected with hepatitis B, get vaccinated for hepatitis A, get screened every six months for ALT and AFP levels, and get an ultrasound once a year. In addition, avoid alcohol, try to get enough sleep every night, and be careful about medicine intake.

If you do not have health insurance, HBI will be hosting some screening and vaccination events sometime this year. If you are 18 and under as well as enrolled in school, you are eligible for free vaccines from your school. Local health departments also have clinics that provide the hepatitis B vaccine for a discounted rate.

Join HBI's Chinese campaign! We are seeking partners and volunteers to assist us with setting up screening/vaccination events at locations that are convenient to the community and creating bilingual Chinese campaign materials. We currently have over forty Chinese speaking doctors involved in the campaign. For more information about outreach efforts and volunteering, please contact Grace Tsai at gtsai@hepbinitiative.org or 703-404-3334 or Dr. Mark Li at mli@hepbinitiative.org. Please also let us know if you get screened or vaccinated as a result of reading this article. ○@

TWO YOUNG MUSICIANS

by Lisa Lee

Two Montgomery County students were chosen from an elite crop of contenders from across the state for an opportunity that only knocks once in a lifetime. The two Chinese-American musicians were among 22 eighth- through 12th-grade students who auditioned before a panel of BSO judges.

Tianheng "Tim" Wang of Boyds and Jeffrey Chu of Gaithersburg, members of the Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra, were thrilled to have the opportunity to play with internationally acclaimed cellist Yo-Yo Ma and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra at the opening celebration of the new Music Center at Strathmore in North Bethesda in February.

The young musicians have played for crowds at Carnegie Hall in New York and at competitions across the region, but the prize of being selected to accompany Yo-Yo Ma was hard to fathom.

"It was unbelievable when I received the call," said Wang, 13, an eighth-grader at Kingsview Middle School in Germantown. "I was in shock, I couldn't say anything." Wang has played the cello since the age of 5, when a teacher introduced him to the instrument. A highly regarded cello teacher heard him playing violin in his preschool orchestra in China and asked to teach the boy.

With a knack for string instruments that runs in the family — his father played the violin — Wang followed suit and made the switch from piano. His average week consists of 90 minutes of practice every day after homework, two hours of rehearsal with the youth



Cellists Tim Wang and Jeffery Chu performed at OCA-DC's Lunar New Year dinner to thundering applause.

orchestra every Wednesday and weekend performances with the Allstate Junior Orchestra in Frederick.

Despite the heavy load, Wang draws inspiration from his family as keeps the Chinese adage in mind— one must taste the bitter first, in order to taste the sweet. "It's hard to make time to put into the cello," Wang said. "My family supports me and forces me to keep going."

Chu, a 15-year-old sophomore at Quince Orchard High School in Gaithersburg, sees playing the cello as a great way to relieve stress. "When I play it, it lets my emotions out," he said.

OCA-DC was proud to honor the accomplishments of Tim Wang and Jeffrey Chu recently at a Lunar New Year celebration in February. Both young musicians were given awards of recognition and praised for their outstanding commitment to excellence. The dinner attendees were delighted to hear a sampling of their exquisite musical talents as they played a lively cello duet during the event. OCA-DC celebrates Tim Wang and Jeffrey Chu—two bright, young, talented

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Stamp